

Introduction

I dedicate this book to my "Polyrhythms Mentors" who represents the very best from our Berklee tradition to the outside world.

- My former Berklee teacher, Mr. Ed Kaspik, who introduced me to the wonderful world of Polyrhythms.
- Mr. Gary Chaffee, who I had the tremendous honor to study with while attending Berklee in the late 1980's and early 1990's.
- Mr. Kenwood Dennard, one of my heroes, inspiration and friend. He constantly encourages and inspires us all to pursue deep knowledge and propel the advancement of the art of drumming.
- Mr. Casey Scheuerell who played an important pivotal role in my educational development.
- Mr. Steve Smith who is currently taking similar materials contained in this book to an entirely higher level.
- Mr. Vinnie Colaiuta the Polyrhythm wizard of all times!
- Mr. John Ramsay who I studied rudiments hand technique and Jazz coordination.
- Mr. Jim Chapim for teaching me the Moeller technique.
- Mr. Alan Dawson for teaching me how to teach.

The materials contained in this workbook were originally compiled to be used in conjunction with my live private drum set instruction and other classes that I teach at the Berklee College of Music, in Boston MA. This workbook will serve as an organized and compact resource to be used as an introduction of certain advanced rhythmic concepts for the intermediate and advanced drum set students.

The main purpose of the workbook is to present basic principles and application of Polyrhythmic ideas on the snare drum and drumset. This book introduces the student to a small sampler of some of the most basic and fundamental materials necessary to the development of polyrhythmic execution and musical performance applications. It is my intent and hope that by diligently studying the basic lessons presented here, the student will be able to develop the ability to:

1. Understand basic time table of ratings from 2 to 8 against **one beat**
2. Navigate through odd groupings against **one beat**
3. Read rhythms and utilize odd groupings against **one beat** for time keeping, fills and solos.

4. Understand basic time table of ratings from 2 to 8 against **two beats**
5. Navigate through odd groupings against **two beats**
6. Read rhythms and utilize odd groupings against **two beats** for time keeping, fills and solos.

7. Understand basic time table of ratings from 2 to 8 against **three beats**
8. Navigate through odd groupings against **three beats**
9. Read rhythms and utilize odd groupings against **three beats** for time keeping, fills and solos.

10. Understand basic time table of ratings from 2 to 8 against **four beats**
11. Navigate through odd groupings against **four beats**
12. Read rhythms and utilize odd groupings against **four beats** for time keeping, fills and solos

Practicing Guidelines:

This book basically can be viewed as a collection of three things:

- 1-Coordination exercises
- 2-Snare drum solos
- 3-Drum set etudes

Practicing the coordination exercises such as the timetables I, II, III & IV, will give you the physical and intellectual ability to execute the snare drum materials and the drum set materials with grater precision. Although the snare drum solos were primarily designed as a demonstration of “one-surface-learning” it can and should be explored in conjunction with other parts of the drum set. An example of the many possibilities would be for instance to play the snare solos while keeping hi hat and bass drum ostinato. Another possibility would be to play the snare drum solos on with one hand while keeping time with the other hand. If creating even more polyrhythmic possibilities is desired, then we can incorporate the feet as well. Playing the material with the feet, or using the feet to play time while executing the materials with the hands. The hi-hat and bass drum can be used to provide the accompaniment in different styles such as Jazz, Rock, Latin, etc. This is how interesting polyrhythmic possibilities will occur.

I strongly recommend that you tap your feet in time, with the tempo and pulse of the music you are performing. Using a metronome will be of greater assistance in indicating how precise you are working with in the rhythmic structures of each etude. Recording yourself then listening back to your performances is also a great way to check how the rhythms are being executed.

After you master a specific etude, and can play it as written, try as much as possible to understand the concepts indicated and improvise and create your won ideas. One of the many possibilities would be to take one measure or more from a specific page and incorporate into your own grooves, fills, and solos. Explore different orchestration of the rhythms that you like. Distributing then to many parts of the drumset will make the rhythms even more interesting.

When working with the drumset etudes, after you master them and can play it as written, try to improvise using identical concepts but now using your forms and ideas.

Drumset artists and professional orchestral percussionists often embellish a music phrase with a “Flam” rudiment. This embellishment can be inserted for instance when you see an accent above the note. The key is to not over do it and choosing wisely where we add the “Flam” so I encourage you to explore this especially on the snare solos. I enjoy the application of such rudimental devices as “Drags”, “Flams”, “Ruffs” and so on. I like playing then specially with larger figures such as 5 over 3, also 5 over 4, and 7 over 4 and so forth. This in my opinion makes the beat wider and creates a thicker texture without compromising the main structures of the music. Another welcome place to apply the embellishments is when you want to retard the end of a solo or etude. As you slow things down you could embellish the rhythms with the rudiments motioned above. I also encourage my students to explore adding a bass drum and crash at times to emphasize the shape of a phrase and add excitement to the music.

Those are just but a few suggestions from the many possible options. Use your creativity and imagination. My wish is that you can arrive at a level of ability that is goes beyond the skills to play the rhythms contained here in this book. This higher level is possible when you can “play with” the rhythms.

Good luck and have fun!

Henrique De Almeida

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TIMETABLE I


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80 - 100 BPM


1 


2 


3 

4 

5 

6 

7 

8 

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TIMETABLE I

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Hands & Feet

Singles Snare Drum Lead

(also practice with bass drum lead)

80 BPM

The musical score consists of eight staves, each representing a different polyrhythmic exercise. Each staff begins with a 4/4 time signature and a repeat sign. The exercises are as follows:

- Staff 1:** Four quarter notes on the same pitch, with an 'x' above and below each note.
- Staff 2:** Four pairs of eighth notes, with an 'x' above and below each pair.
- Staff 3:** Four groups of three eighth notes (triplets), with an 'x' above and below each group and the number '3' written below.
- Staff 4:** Four groups of four eighth notes, with an 'x' above and below each group.
- Staff 5:** Four groups of five eighth notes, with an 'x' above and below each group and the number '5' written below.
- Staff 6:** Four groups of six eighth notes, with an 'x' above and below each group and the number '6' written below.
- Staff 7:** Four groups of seven eighth notes, with an 'x' above and below each group and the number '7' written below.
- Staff 8:** Four groups of eight eighth notes, with an 'x' above and below each group.

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